

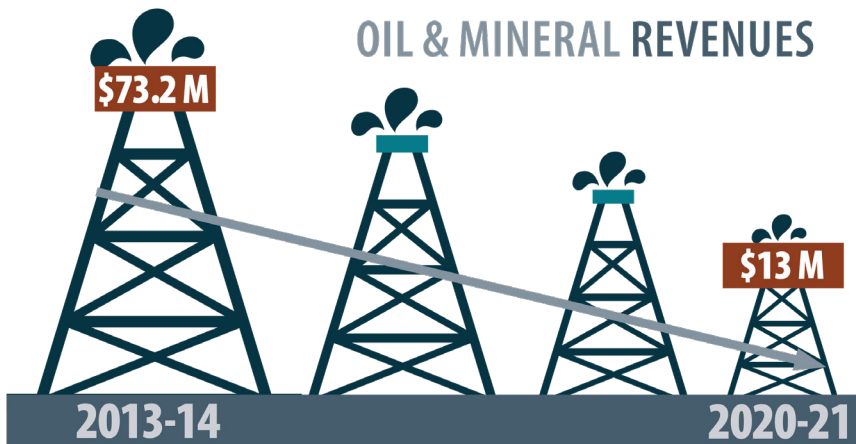


A PATH TO STABILITY

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is proposing a change to the current license fee structure which will result in a simple and more intuitive user experience and provide the agency with a more stable source of revenue crucial to the department's ability to provide the mission-critical programs and services to the people of Louisiana.

Why Are We Doing This?

- Inflation has rendered the department's fee structure obsolete.
- Our basic license fees have been the same since 2000, and commercial fees have largely been the same since 1985. Obviously neither has kept up with inflation over that period.
- Historically a large portion of LDWF's Conservation Fund budget has been generated from oil and gas royalties. But that revenue has steadily declined as oil prices and production have dropped. What was once \$73.2 million annually is now \$13 million.
- From 2010 through 2016, \$65 million in the Artificial Reef Fund was transferred into the state general fund to balance the state's budget.



Reagan was President in 1985



BlackBerry smartphone was introduced in 2000

Expenses And New Challenges Rise

LDWF has taken on millions of dollars in new expenses since 2000 to provide needed services for state resources and the people of this state.

Some of the new expenses for important programs have dug into a budget where funding is declining.

➤ Invasive species (IS)

- As invasive species grew, LDWF had to hire an IS Coordinator
- Asian carp monitoring
- Cost of fighting giant salvinia
- Infestation of feral hogs

➤ Red snapper management

➤ Prevention of chronic wasting disease in deer

➤ Coastal Master Plan projects

➤ Deepwater Horizon oil spill sampling

➤ Development and maintenance of an Oyster Hatchery

➤ Stock assessment programs

➤ Community fishing programs

➤ Continued management of wildlife management areas

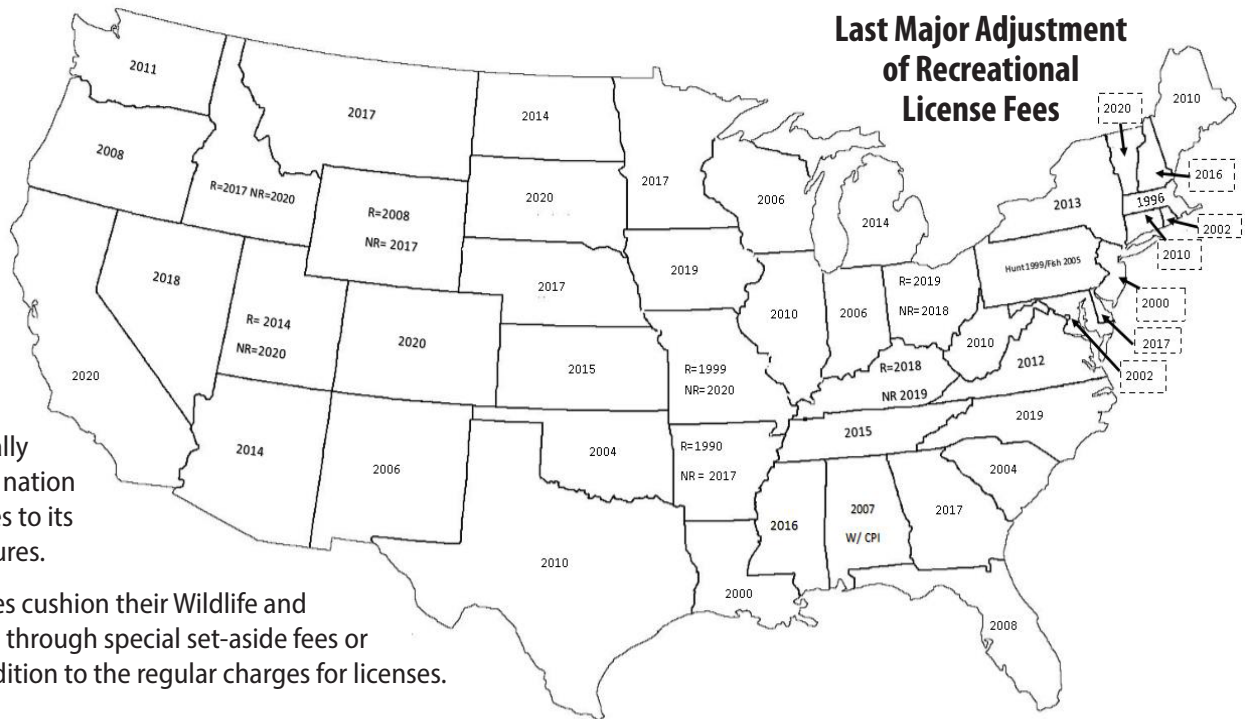
➤ Seafood certification

➤ NRDA project oversight

➤ LDWF Enforcement Division

- Increased cost of agent training and equipment
- Became the primary maritime security for entire state

Fee Increases Across The United States



Since 2000, virtually every state in the nation has made changes to its license fee structures.

A number of states cushion their Wildlife and Fisheries budgets through special set-aside fees or allocations, in addition to the regular charges for licenses.

What Has LDWF Done To Stabilize Our Financial Situation?



DISCRETIONARY SPENDING CUTS
(since 2016)
DOWN 38%

- Since Jack Montoucet has been secretary, LDWF has over 152 fewer staff.
- Our Enforcement Agents are now keeping vehicles well over 150,000 miles. While it saves money, it also makes rescues and patrolling risky endeavors for the agents and the public.
- The agency has reduced travel expenses, supply costs and major repairs.
- Department-wide discretionary expenses from the Conservation Fund (LDWF's general operating budget) have decreased by 38% over the past five years.

What Will LDWF License Restructuring Do?

- The new fee structure, which will be competitive with other Gulf Coast states, will streamline the current complicated license structure by reducing the number of licenses required.
- It will also consolidate recreational hunting and fishing privileges to eliminate confusion. In many cases, new consolidated licenses will be less expensive than the current individual costs and will provide larger benefits packages to fishermen and hunters. The new structure also includes fees for some folks, such as paddlers, who currently use the state's waterways at no charge.
- LDWF would also be able to get a larger portion of federal matching revenues. Louisiana is missing out on millions of dollars of federal matching funds because of our low license fees.
- The benefits from the restructuring would dramatically reduce the department's need to receive state funding to continue to providing services to the public.

What If The Restructure Is Denied?

The department will have to take the risky path of being another agency needing millions of dollars in funding from the state government. This could become a serious problem in years when the state has to cut its budget. ***Then the really serious parts come.***

- First, the department will not be able to hire and train much-needed Enforcement Agents. The department is already over 20 agents short and that could quickly become 35 to 45. The result could mean trouble on the waterways where people fish, crab, shrimp and boat. We would not have enough agents to provide the safety for those persons enjoying those areas.
- We would not be available for many life-saving rescues that our agents perform every year. Imagine what would happen with 45 fewer agents around on holiday weekends like the Fourth of July and Labor Day?
- The number of biologists statewide would be reduced by at least half, endangering our ability to effectively monitor wildlife and habitat for fish, oysters, shrimp, crabs, etc.
- The ripple effect could result in economic calamity for the fishing industry and hurt the financial stability of restaurants, sporting goods stores and seafood markets if many seafood producing areas are harmed. It could also cause problems for recreational fishermen. If we don't have enough biologists in the field, we would obviously have to reduce the catch limit on certain fish out of an abundance of caution that they are not overfished.
- Also popular programs such as hunter and fisher education programs for youth would be eliminated. Fishing and hunting programs for youth is key to our effort to keep youth interested in fishing and hunting, hoping they will purchase licenses and also to be good stewards of our natural resources.



The Bottom Line

Approving LDWF's proposed restructure will ensure real, long-lasting financial security for the department, and reduce the need for funding from the state budget. The fee restructuring would allow the agency to continue funding the programs that make our citizens and visitors safe and keep our hunting and fishing opportunities available.

